Railway crossings in Orissa

545. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) how many railway crossings are there in different parts of Orissa on national highways and State highways, especially in East Coast Railway zone and South East Central zone coming under Orissa State;

(b) whether Government have taken any steps to build under/over bridges on these highways; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There are nine level crossings on National Highways and 21 level crossings on State Highways in the State of Orissa, on East Coast and South East Central Zones.

(b) and (c) Out of 30 level crossings on National/State Highways in the State of Orissa, five Level Crossings—three on National Highways and two on State Highways, have been sanctioned for replacement by Road Over Bridges (ROBs). Further, National Highway Authority of India has initiated proposal to construct Road Over Bridge in lieu of Level Crossing No. 268 falling on National Highway No. 200.

Luxury trains

546. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to run six luxury trains on the pattern of Palace on Wheels, to woo tourists;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) in view of the Orissa being the heritage center of the country, whether Government also propose to run such a train on the ECoR system, to improve the economy of this backward region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Railways runs luxury tourist trains *viz.*

Palace on Wheels and the Heritage on Wheels in the Rajasthan Sector and the Deccan Odyssey in Maharashtra Sector; steam safari train—the Fairy Queen on Delhi—Alwar Sector. Further, Indian Railway has approved for luxury trains in the state of Punjab and Karnataka only.

(c) Tourist trains on the pattern of 'Palace on Wheels' can only be examined by the Ministry once comprehensive proposal in all respect is received from the concerned State Government. Presently, there is no such proposal for launching of such trains in Orissa.

Rail operation from India to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh

547. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways are considering to expand its operations to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh;

(b) if so, the complete details in this regard;

(c) whether Indian Railways are setting up a 160 km. rail route from Colombo to Matara; and

(d) if so, the complete details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) There are already Rail links between India and Bangladesh. Following five Rail routes are existing between India and Bangladesh:

1. Gede (India)—Darsana (Bangladesh)—Broad Gauge.

2. Singhabad (India)—Rohanpur (Bangladesh)—Broad Gauge.

3. Petrapole (India)—Benapole (Bangladesh)—Broad Gauge.

4. Radhikapur (India)—Birol (Bangladesh)—Broad Gauge on Indian side and Metre Gauge on Bangladesh side

5. Mahisasan (India)—Shahbazpur (Bangladesh)—Metre Gauge.

(c) and (d) On the request of Government of Sri Lanka, the Government of India has agreed to rehabilitate and upgrade Colombo-Matara Coast Line of Sri Lankan Railways. RITES Ltd. have carried out a feasibility